

American Art of the 1930s

Selections from the Collection
of the Whitney Museum of American Art





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This exhibition is made possible
through the support of the National Committee
of the Whitney Museum of American Art

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Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Cover, top: Stuart Davis,
Sixth Avenue EL, 1931
Lithograph, 16 × 21 inches
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel M. Kootz 77.74

Bottom: Reginald Marsh,
Bread Line—No One Has Starved,
1932 (restruck 1969)
Etching, 13 × 15½ inches
Original plate donated by William Benton
69.97j

Designer: Nathan Garland

All photographs are by Geoffrey Clements except
Peggy Bacon, *The Ardent Bowlers*, by David Allison;
and George L. K. Morris, *Nautical Composition*,
by Percy Rainford.

Foreword

The programs of the Whitney Museum of American Art present the entire scope of American art, with emphasis on the twentieth century and especially the work of living artists. The Museum is the most active institution devoted to American art, with a wide range of activities, including acquisitions, exhibitions, publications, and loans to other museums. In the past several years we have realized that one of the ways to present the Permanent Collection to a larger audience is to allow works to travel to other museums, with the result that our schedule of traveling exhibitions has increased dramatically.

The National Committee of the Whitney Museum of American Art was formed in 1979 and it now has forty-five members from twenty-three states, all of whom are vitally interested in American art. They support it with activities in their own communities, which benefit from their association with each other and with the Whitney Museum. Each year the National Committee sets aside certain funds which it generates to sponsor a program that ultimately will benefit people throughout the United States. "American Art of the 1930s: Selections from the Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art" is the first such project they have supported. We are very pleased that the National Committee enthusiastically endorsed this traveling show as their sponsorship has enabled us to offer the exhibition to nine museums, some of which do not have the facilities to organize an exhibition of this scope. The Committee has assisted us in making the resources and collection of the Whitney Museum available to a wide audience which otherwise might not

have an opportunity to become familiar with this vigorous period in American art.

In the last five years the Whitney Museum has devoted considerable attention to American art of the 1930s, and in fact has played a major role in generating new, widespread interest in the subject. The 1930s was a time when American artists were emerging from the dominance of European modernism. It was a decade encompassing extraordinary polarities—from American Scene painting to total abstraction. As American art of the 1940s and 1950s achieved international acclaim, people began to look at the 1930s as an important historical precursor. Indeed, the majority of the abstract works in this exhibition have been acquired by the Museum in the past ten years, a tribute to our patrons, who generously supported our efforts to collect in this area. The Permanent Collection of the Whitney Museum now has a unique ability to present a survey of this period; its holdings of American art of the 1930s cover the decade's broad range of styles and themes.

This exhibition has been organized by Jennifer Russell, Assistant Director of the Whitney Museum. Patterson Sims, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection, has provided an illuminating catalogue essay, and many members of the Museum staff have assisted with the exhibition and publication. We are particularly proud that the National Committee accepted our recommendation to sponsor this exhibition, and we are gratified by the enthusiastic response of other museums. American art of the 1930s has not yet been sufficiently investigated; we are pleased to join with the public in exploring this dynamic period.

Tom Armstrong
Director
Whitney Museum of American Art



Charles Demuth

Buildings, Lancaster, 1930

Oil on composition board, 24 × 20 inches

Anonymous gift 58.63

American Art of the 1930s: An Introduction

From the vantage of the early 1980s, the critical perception of American art of the 1930s has been both expanded and focused. Now more than ever, it is possible to see beyond an earlier conception of that period, a conception which rejected all abstraction, and conceived of the era as producing only pastoral glorifications of the rural scene or socially conscious representations of depressed urban reality. In the present period of pluralism, the technical finesse and humanistic sensitivity of the Social Realists and American Regionalists is reaffirmed, while respect for the biomorphic and geometric formalism of the decade's smaller group of abstract artists continues to grow.

When the decade opened, the rigorous modernist impulse—the first wave of the avant-garde—was still active. However it was rapidly subsumed by a rush to record social injustice and the American Scene. Reacting against such specific representations, in the late 1930s a new generation of artists carefully composed geometric and biomorphic abstractions and carried modernism into non-objectivity. Such contrasts gave the decade its energy and range. Though throughout the period representation was clearly dominant, the international attention accorded post-1945 American abstraction has decisively shifted our perception of the 1930s. Seeking the origins of postwar artistic achievements, in the 1960s art historians began to reevaluate abstract art of the 1930s, and at the same time to demote as topical, sentimental and drab the decade's figurative painting. The negative sense of the 1930s as “that sad decade that was midwife to at least three decades of ideas”¹ has now been replaced by a more accurate description of a time in which “many ideas about art had a chance to develop quietly.”²

This survey, drawn from the Whitney Mu-

seum's Permanent Collection—which contains one of the largest holdings of American art of this period—incorporates both representational and non-objective work. Nearly all the artists allied themselves with one of these camps or the other; only Georgia O'Keeffe and Stuart Davis bridged the gap. By the early 1930s the Depression at home and the rise of totalitarianism abroad had challenged art strictly based upon personal expression and formal exploration. A reaction to two decades of astonishing European-inspired artistic innovation set in; aesthetic isolationism resulted. In this first decade of its existence, as the only museum primarily devoted to recent American art, the Whitney Museum's acquisition policy unequivocally endorsed American images. Only recently has the earlier institutional bias for realism been replaced by a fascination for abstraction; almost all the abstract works included in this survey were acquired by the Museum in the last ten years.

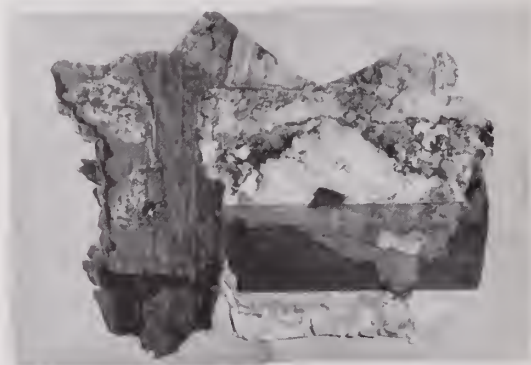
American modernism had not collapsed with the stock market crash in late 1929. Well into the 1930s, first-generation modernist thinking remained vital. In works as disparate as *Composition* by the architect-turned-painter Oscar Bluemner; Stuart Davis' pair of 1931 prints, Arshile Gorky's *Mannikin*, John Marin's desolidified ode to progress and the Brooklyn Bridge, Alfred Maurer's *Still Life*, Joseph Stella's *Collage, Number 11*, and Augustus Vincent Tack's *Before Egypt*, the pervasive influence of modernism can still be detected. Color for its own sake was explored in Bluemner's structural rendering and Tack's religion-inspired abstraction of the cosmos. The abstractions of Tack, who supported himself as a traditional portrait painter, were only appreciated during his lifetime by Duncan Phillips, but may now be understood as antecedents to the work of Clyfford Still and even Morris Louis.



Augustus Vincent Tack
Before Egypt, 1930–35
 Oil on canvas mounted on composition board,
 26 × 45 inches
 Gift of Duncan Phillips 60.13



Arshile Gorky
Mannikin, 1931
 Lithograph, 15 × 11½ inches
 Purchase 74.36



Joseph Stella
Collage, Number 11, c. 1933
 Collage of leaves, sand, paper and wood,
 11½ × 17 inches
 Gift of Mrs. Morton Baum 68.23

Stuart Davis' formidable Manhattan and New England views show specific locales of the American Scene, but in rebus-like configurations. Taking great liberties with naturalistic appearances, these Davis lithographs, and Gorky's closely related print of the same year, exploit a variety of graphic notations within the framework of Cubist collage construction. This approach was starkly employed by Joseph Stella in a series of Dada-inspired works, such as *Collage, Number 11*. Probably begun in the early 1920s and continued throughout his life, these assemblages of scraps were never exhibited publicly during Stella's lifetime; they took on new meaning in relation to the later work of Joseph Cornell and Robert Rauschenberg. As in Stella's simple found-art composition, surface tactility was an important feature of Maurer's exploratory *Still Life*, along with a decorative repetition akin to Matisse.

Aspects of first-generation avant-garde American abstraction are most cohesively apparent in the work of the Precisionists. Their geometric, unpopulated treatment of industrial and agrarian structures grafted Analytic Cubist pictorial devices to vernacular American architecture. Their art perceives America as a utopia of coolly functional industrial and farming facilities and heroic, defiant skyscrapers. An immaculate Manhattan appears in George Ault's painting of a downtown thoroughfare, in Earl Horter's faceted watercolor of the Chrysler Building, and in prints by Howard Cook, Armin Landeck, and Louis Lozowick. Similarly crisp graphic precision is applied to the machine in Henry Billings' print *Machines and Men*. Based on sites in southeastern Pennsylvania only twenty miles apart, Ralston Crawford's painting of the Worth Steel Plant and Charles Demuth's of the Eshelman Feed Company are chaste icons of American productivity. Such works, as well as Edward Bruce's *In-*



George Ault
Hudson Street, 1932
 Oil on canvas, 24 × 20 inches
 Purchase 33.40



Ralston Crawford
Steel Foundry, Coatesville, Pa., 1936-37
 Oil on canvas, 32 × 40 inches
 Purchase 37.10

dust, recall the art critic Thomas Craven's dissatisfaction that "the painter has finished with man, that to be thoroughly modern and American he must represent only our instruments of production."³ Even in a still life like Niles Spencer's *The Green Table* or Charles Sheeler's exquisitely exact, photo-based drawing *Interior; Bucks County Barn*, the complex planar dissections of Precisionism are apparent. The Precisionists' work remains the exemplar of 1930s modernism.

The stylistic elements, but not the substance, of Precisionism were utilized in Billings' *Lehigh Valley*, Peter Blume's *Light of the World*, and O. Louis Guglielmi's *The Various Spring* to sharply and neutrally unify ambiguous information. Scale disjunctions, color alterations, and unexplained narrative mark these singular American Surrealist images. Rather than plumb the subconscious in the European Surrealist manner, American Surrealists concocted theatrical vignettes that comment on everyday existence. The Surrealist movement was introduced in the United States in a 1931 exhibition at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut. That show then traveled to the Julien Levy Gallery in New York, which remained a center of Surrealism during the decade. Surrealist art was more available in America than its artists; only Salvador Dali and Yves Tanguy came to this country during the 1930s. Dali first traveled to the U.S. in 1934 and gave a celebrated lecture-performance the following year at the Museum of Modern Art, where a sweeping survey, "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism," opened in late 1936. Tanguy was the most frequently exhibited of the Surrealists here; he was given solo shows in 1935, 1936, and in 1939, when he moved to America. More affected by societal circumstances than by the personal obsessions of Dali and Tanguy, Americans evolved their own, considerably more down-to-earth version of Surrealism.

Billings titled *Lehigh Valley* after the railroad company whose locomotive, tracks, and signal are seen in the painting. The short text on the billboard erected in the lush field derives from a line in William Blake's poem "Proverbs of Hell." Even the artist is unclear about the meaning of the apparatus in the foreground. In *Light of the World* Blume set his disquieting scene against a backdrop of the hills of Sherman, Connecticut, where he had recently moved from New York City. At the left is a version of an architectural model of Notre-Dame and, in the center, plaster cornices, which Blume had observed on a visit to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The three stunned figures and a ventriloquist's dummy focus, bewildered and awestruck, on the central light. Based on a giant lighthouse reflector lamp, the light and its unearthly, iridescent glow have been interpreted as symbolizing impending doom or as the commercial power of the radio. On the base of the lamp rests a model for the mechanism used to install the Egyptian obelisk Cleopatra's Needle behind the Metropolitan Museum in Central Park. Current events and social consciousness decode Guglielmi's *The Various Spring*. The triplicate lifeless infants on Maypoles—starved or bombed—are identified by the year of the stock market crash and its inevitable conclusion in war. The Maypole has both traditional ethnic associations and contemporaneous associations with the international struggle of the working class. Painted the same year as Picasso's *Guernica*, *The Various Spring* is a modest but moving American condemnation of privation and war. The work of the Californian Helen Lundeberg bridges the gap between American and European Surrealism. She was part of a self-proclaimed post-Surrealist group which explored metaphysical themes. For instance, the doorknob in her print *Planets* metamorphoses itself into a celestial orb.



Henry Billings
Lehigh Valley, c. 1930
 Tempera on composition board,
 20 × 25 inches
 Purchase 35.1



O. Louis Guglielmi
The Various Spring, 1937
 Oil on canvas, 15¼ × 19½ inches
 Promised gift of Flora Whitney Miller
 P.69.78



Peter Blume
Light of the World, 1932
 Oil on composition board, 18 × 20¼ inches
 Purchase 33.5



Man Ray
La Fortune, 1938
 Oil on canvas, 24 × 29 inches
 Gift of the Simon Foundation 72.179

Federico Castellón's *The Dark Figure* and Man Ray's *La Fortune* completely forgo the political commentary or complex philosophic digressions of Billings, Blume, and Guglielmi in favor of the generative European Surrealist ideology of pictorialized dreams and fantasies. Both artists lived in Europe during the 1930s. But whether living abroad or at home, all these Surrealist artists employed precisely executed realism to subversively authenticate personal fantasies.

Concurrently, the 1930s saw a resurgence of carefully crafted realism concerned with the classic themes of the figure and the still life. The bulwark of this tradition was the Art Students League of New York, where a great number of the artists in this exhibition were trained and later taught. Sensitive and straightforward, the posed, studio-based paintings of Isabel Bishop, Leon Kroll, Walt Kuhn, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, and George Luks exemplify the League's conservative figurative interests, and establish a continuity with the realist doctrine of Thomas Eakins in the late nineteenth century and the more subdued aspects of the artists of The Eight in the early twentieth. *The Sentinels* by Alexander Brook, whose work was probably more widely exhibited and received a greater number of awards than any other American painter of the period, represents the League's approach to still life: calm, considered, and impersonal. During the 1920s Thomas Hart Benton, Kuhn, Luks, and John Sloan (whose *Gist of Art* sums up his own and many of the League's educational and artistic principles) taught there. In the 1930s Peggy Bacon, Bishop, Brook, John Steuart Curry, Kuniyoshi, Edward Laning, and Reginald Marsh were instructors. Above all was felt the influence of Kenneth Hayes Miller, the teacher of almost this entire group. Miller was associated with the League from 1911 to 1952. He taught his many students to impose



Walt Kuhn
The Blue Clown, 1931
 Oil on canvas, 30 × 25 inches
 Purchase 32.25



Kenneth Hayes Miller
Box Party, 1936
 Oil and tempera on canvas, 60 × 46 inches
 Purchase 36.147

a classical order on the world around them, and urged them to move out of the studio and onto the street. As Robert M. Coates noted of Miller's art, he tried "to make Titian feel at home on Fourteenth Street and crowd Veronese into a Department Store."⁴

If one boundary of the lives of these painters was the Art Students League on West Fifty-seventh Street, the other was Fourteenth Street. It was the New York City boulevard that most exemplified the democratic urban vitality they reveled in. Bishop, Laning, Marsh, Miller, and Isaac and Raphael Soyer all had their studios there or nearby. One art historian even went so far as to group these artists as the Fourteenth Street School.⁵ They took as their central topic a running narrative of their lives in the city. Something of the camaraderie and cohesion of this group is suggested in Bacon's drypoint of *The Ardent Bowlers*. Among the artists seen in this characteristically humorous print are



Edward Laning
Fourteenth Street, 1931
 Tempera on canvas, 30 × 40 inches
 Purchase 33.17



Peggy Bacon
The Ardent Bowlers, 1932
 Drypoint, 12% × 21 inches
 Purchase 32.85

Bacon (in profile in front, speaking to another woman), Kuniyoshi (with his pipe and upward gaze), Bacon's husband, Brook (second man to the left of Kuniyoshi), Niles Spencer (at left, gazing downward with a tipped glass), Marsh (at lower left, coatless but with a tie), and the artist Katherine Schmidt (in V-neck dress, at center), who was married to Kuniyoshi.

Some of the best work of these urban realists was their prints. Lithography enjoyed a renaissance in the 1930s as it could reach a wide audience and be cheaply produced. The medium generated some of the period's most comic and politically compelling documents. John Sloan was described at this time as "a mild Lautrec of New York's bohemia,"⁶ but this designation could have as easily applied to Bacon, Paul Cadmus, or Marsh. In *Salesmanship*, Sloan shows Charles W. Kraushaar, brother of his long-time dealer, offering well-stuffed, doubting clients an emaciated, post-Cubist figuration. His *A Thirst for Art* settled, at least for the 1930s, what exhibition openings were all about. The complaisant prosperity of the figures in Bishop's *On the Street* intensifies the spectral poverty of Marsh's earlier, elongated print *Bread Line—No One Has Starved*. As well, the lithographs by the American Regionalists—Benton, Curry, and Grant Wood—share in the medium's ability to powerfully record the epoch's events and sentiments.

The diversions of these desperate days—weekly bowling matches, rowdy drinking, the dance hall, even a men's quartet—made life bearable and were quickly turned into art. Eschewing such escapism, Social Realist painters such as Philip Evergood, Louis Ribak, Ben Shahn, and Isaac and Raphael Soyer directly addressed the issues of poverty, unemployment and the necessity of performing dull, gritty jobs. The visits to



John Sloan
A Thirst for Art, 1939
Etching, 8 × 10 inches
Purchase 52.35



Isabel Bishop
On the Street, 1934
Etching, 7³/₁₆ × 14⁵/₈ inches
Purchase 34.34

New York during the 1930s of the Mexican Socialist muralists, José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Siquieros, encouraged politicized uses of art. The more bathetic side of Social Realism is seen in Evergood's *Lily and the Sparrows*; its extraction of dignity from a commonplace occurrence has earned this work an unlikely celebrity. In Raphael Soyer's *Office Girls* the ubiquitous, sad-eyed League model Broe is seen at the left and adds a melancholy note to this bustling scene. Ribak's *Home Relief Station* and Isaac Soyer's *Employment Agency* have the strident immediacy of photojournalism. Shahn's *Scott's Run, West Virginia* was in fact directly based on photographs. Shahn photographed this depressed coalmining town in October 1935 for the government's Farm Service Administration, with which he was associated through 1938. He got the job with the FSA through his friend Walker Evans, who coincidentally also began, in June 1935, his government career in Scott's Run. These Social Realist works recall Sloan's definition of painting in *Gist of Art* as "drawing, with the additional means of color"⁷ while demonstrating the critic Barbara Rose's later comment that "often the paintings of the social realists were little more than stylized drawing in which paint was merely a fill between contours."⁸

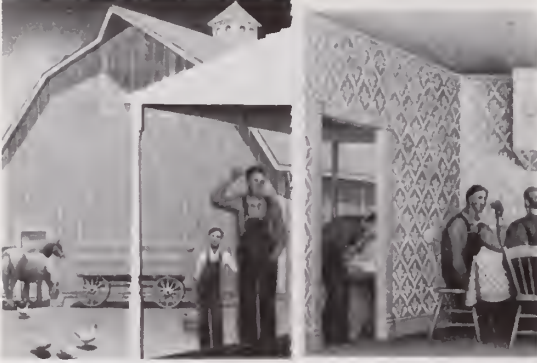
More substantial as paintings and more subtle as revelations of social realities are Charles Burchfield's 1920s and 1930s views of urban life. It was Burchfield's stated intention in *Winter Twilight* and *Ice Glare* to show the back streets and desolate buildings of Salem, Ohio, where he was raised, and Buffalo, New York, where he moved in 1925, "in all their garish and crude primitiveness and unlovely decay."⁹ Yet, as his friend Edward Hopper observed of him, "From what is to the mediocre artist and unseeing layman the boredom of everyday existence in a provincial



Ben Shahn
Scott's Run, West Virginia, 1937
 Tempera on cardboard, 22¼ × 27⅞ inches
 Purchase 38.11



Charles Burchfield
Winter Twilight, 1930
 Oil on composition board, 27¼ × 30½ inches
 Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.128



Grant Wood
Dinner for Threshers (left section), 1933
 Pencil and gouache on brown paper,
 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 26 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches
 Purchase 33.79

community, [Burchfield] has extracted a quality that we may call poetic, romantic, lyric. . . . By sympathy with the particular he has made it epic and universal.”¹⁰

For other artists in the 1930s as diverse as Thomas Hart Benton and Georgia O’Keeffe, the city was perceived as so contaminating to the spirit that it was abandoned in favor of the redemptiveness of the pristine countryside. Benton, along with Curry and Grant Wood, developed an imagery of the appearances, customs, and landscapes of Midwestern America. As their spokesman he declared, “We symbolized what the majority of Americans had in mind—America itself.”¹¹ Following sojourns abroad and, for Benton and Curry, in New York as well, these so-called American Regionalists returned to their native Midwest to teach, and to paint, often in vast public murals, their mythic vision of an agrarian, diligent, and heroic America. Wood’s *Dinner for Threshers*, which he hoped

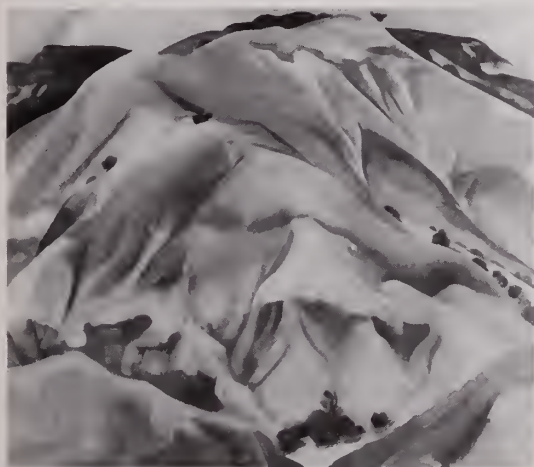
to make into a mural, exists in three versions: a study for the whole work, a tempera painting, and the Museum’s later set of drawings for the end sections. Made only four years after Wood adopted the precise documentary style and Midwestern subject matter upon which his renown rests, *Dinner for Threshers* is rich in the detail and the reverence that authenticate his art. He has written of this scene that it “is from my own life. It includes my family and our neighbors, our table cloths, our chairs, and our hens.”¹² He even went so far as to correctly leave the farmers’ foreheads white where their hats shielded them from the sun. Joe Jones’ *American Farm* combines Regionalism with a strong social statement. In a sea of erosion, the farm is both a beacon and a battlement.

For other American artists, paintings of the American Scene became exaltations of their chosen Edenic landscape. For Marsden Hartley it was located on the New England coast and Nova Scotia, for Georgia O’Keeffe in New Mexico. Hartley’s *The Old Bars*, *Dogtown*, painted while he was staying in Nova Scotia, was a recollection of a remote and wild area outside Gloucester, Massachusetts, which he had first visited in 1931. This painting was included in 1937 in his final show with Alfred Stieglitz and was the only work which sold. The show was accompanied by a catalogue essay, written by the artist, entitled “On the Subject of Nativeness—A Tribute to Maine.” O’Keeffe also exhibited with Stieglitz. She began spending her summers in New Mexico in 1929 and twenty years later moved there full-time. *The Mountain, New Mexico* depicts the state’s distinctive grassless scrub-and-tree-dotted badlands, which for O’Keeffe were America’s most beautiful country. As in her paintings of flowers, O’Keeffe has focused on her subject to the exclusion of its surroundings.

Throughout the 1930s, O’Keeffe and John



Marsden Hartley
The Old Bars, Dogtown, 1936
 Oil on composition board, 18 × 24 inches
 Purchase 37.26



Georgia O'Keeffe
The Mountain, New Mexico, 1931
 Oil on canvas, 30 × 36 inches
 Purchase 32.14

Marin were given yearly shows at Stieglitz's *An American Place*, and regularly sold their work. They were exceptions. During the 1930s few American artists made sales or even had a sustained gallery affiliation. Though several New York galleries—Marie Harriman, Pierre Matisse, and Curt Valentine—did show Americans along with their European artists, relatively few were devoted to American work. Even when they did specialize like Stieglitz, who also showed Demuth and Hartley, they had limited economic success.

Among the most successful of the galleries that supported Americans was the Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery, where the work of Bacon, Brook, Burchfield, Hopper, Luks, Marsh, and Miller was shown. Edith Halpert's Downtown Gallery regularly presented exhibitions of the art of Davis, Guglielmi, Kuniyoshi, Shahn, and Sheeler. Midtown Gallery gave shows to Bishop and Cadmus, and Kraushaar Galleries continued to handle Sloan. Remarkably few sales were made. In the definition of the early 1930s, a professional artist was a man whose wife had a steady job.

There was only a handful of serious collectors of contemporary American art during the 1930s. The acquisitions of Ferdinand Howald, Duncan Phillips, Edward Root, and a few others, which later formed the basis of important public collections, were insufficient to sustain many artists. Like Phillips, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and most ambitiously, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, bought extensively for the museums they founded and embarked on personal stipend programs for selected artists. But during the 1930s the primary support for most American artists came from government relief projects.

In late 1933 President Roosevelt started the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). (The project became interconnected with the

Whitney Museum when Juliana Force, the Museum's first director, became head of the PWAP's regional division; swamped with work and wreathed in controversy, Mrs. Force had to close the Museum temporarily.) The New York regional division took in about a quarter of the four thousand artists who were assisted in the year and a half that the PWAP operated. The PWAP was succeeded in October 1934 by the Section of Painting and Sculpture of the Treasury Department. The painter Edward Bruce had been chief of the PWAP and then was named head of the new section. His sensitive leadership typified the special compassion and professional insight that characterized these government programs. In May 1935 the better-known and even more effective and comprehensive Works Progress Administration (WPA) began. The two agencies were collectively known as the Federal Art Project (FAP). Dissolved in 1943, the FAP in its various divisions provided sustained assistance to over six thousand artists. The easel and mural sections were of the greatest aid to painters, who benefited from the relative artistic freedom and were kept from privation by regular paychecks. Almost every artist in this survey had the opportunity to join the FAP and a great number did. It alleviated the artists' political unrest as well as their economic need. It mitigated their anger—government support continued amidst widespread political activism. As the fiercely vocal Stuart Davis remarked of the times, "The artist has not simply looked out the window; he has had to step into the street."¹³

Though representational art predominated in the more than one hundred thousand paintings created under federal auspices, numerous abstract artists were affiliated with the projects. This support mostly applied to the next generation of abstractionists. American abstract artists were numerically over-

whelmed, but by banding together overcame limited possibilities for public support and visibility. Their work ranks with any produced in the period. As William Agee noted in his essay on the 1930s, "Art history is never determined by numbers, only by quality."¹⁴ The history of abstract art in America in the 1930s is recorded in isolated events, not a flow of activity. To view contemporary abstraction, artists and the public could only visit A. E. Gallatin's Gallery (later Museum) of Living Art, located at New York University on Washington Square, or see loans or occasional exhibitions from Katherine Dreier's Société Anonyme.

A great source of information concerning the latest European developments was the German and French artists who arrived as exiles to this country; some remained and became American citizens. In 1932 George Grosz first visited the United States and returned to take up permanent residence the following year. In 1933 Hans Hofmann opened his art school in New York and Josef and Annie Albers came from Berlin to teach at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. The Frenchman Jean Hélion came to the U.S. for the first time in 1932. In 1936 he returned to live and work in Virginia and New York and remained on and off through 1940. His presence and that of Fernand Léger, who visited America for three extended periods during the 1930s, were the most instructive influences on American geometric abstractionists. In 1937, László Moholy-Nagy arrived in Chicago to open the New Bauhaus School.

With two notable exceptions, the museums paid little attention to recent abstraction. In February and March of 1935, the Whitney Museum presented its exhibition "Abstract Painting in America." Sixty-five artists were represented in the survey, which stressed the modernist achievements of the preceding twenty years. It was a seminal exhibition, yet

by present standards over half the work was representational. For example, Theodore Roszak's *Fisherman's Bride*, with its peculiar amalgam of Cubism and Surrealism, was shown in this survey. In April 1936 the Museum of Modern Art held its pivotal survey "Cubism and Abstract Art," which included only one native American (Alexander Calder). Partly in response to the inadequacies of these major abstract shows, the American Abstract Artists (AAA) was organized, following meetings in the fall and spring of 1936. In 1937, Solomon R. Guggenheim's Museum of Non-Objective Art, with its extensive European collection and major Kandinsky holdings, was founded. Three events concluded the period: in 1940 the AAA picketing of the Museum of Modern Art and the arrival in New York of the Dutch Neo-Plasticist Piet Mondrian, and in 1942 the forced closing by New York University of Gallatin's Museum of Living Art.

Remembering the late 1930s in New York, Clement Greenberg wrote, "The big event, as I saw it, was the annual show of the American Abstract Artists group."¹⁵ After many heated conversations in downtown lofts, a group of thirty-nine abstract artists held the first AAA exhibition in April 1937. In conjunction with this first show, the group issued a portfolio of thirty prints—selling for fifty cents—which included the four prints in this exhibition by Ilya Bolotowsky, Rosalind Bengelsdorf Browne, Gertrude Greene, and George L. K. Morris. Fifteen hundred visitors crowded into this show; seven thousand attended the next year's exhibition. Held yearly along with symposia, the AAA shows helped change American attitudes. Through the 1930s, AAA membership numbered about fifty, and encompassed a majority of America's abstract artists. Though Charles Biederman, Calder, Davis, Willem de Kooning, Arthur Dove, Gorky, and certain

others disassociated themselves, most artists eagerly joined the group and were gratified by the growing interest in their art. Many of the artists worked together in the WPA and, as director of the New York regional Mural Division, the painter Burgoyne Diller oversaw the creation of numerous abstract murals. Diller's duties limited his own work during the 1930s and precluded his making murals himself. But his drawing *Second Theme*, and Ad Reinhardt's *Collage*, indicate the furthest reaches during the decade of Neo-Plasticism's geometric simplicity. Ilya Bolotowsky, de Kooning, and Albert Swinden were among the twelve abstract artists chosen to make WPA murals for the Williamsburg Housing Project. Diller's most ambitious WPA commission of abstract murals, the Williamsburg project was one of the few instances in which the architect (William Lescaze) collaborated with the artists. De Kooning's untitled gouache is a more sophisticated treatment of the main elements of his lost mural study for the project's Social Room. The Museum's de Kooning drawing and Bolotowsky's and Swinden's studies for the Williamsburg Housing Project murals have been (until Bolotowsky's re-creation of his mural in 1980) along with their other related preparatory studies the only versions in which the murals existed. Bolotowsky painted perhaps the first abstract mural in America, and it remains one of the finest examples of his blend of biomorphic and geometric forms. Less abstract and lyrically organic, Rosalind Bengelsdorf Browne's Central Nurses Home mural study is the final presentation version for this work. Her only executed public mural, it was painted on canvas and installed on the fifth floor of the Central Nurses Home on Welfare (now Roosevelt) Island, off Manhattan. Like many WPA murals, it was subsequently painted over. Mrs. Browne was married to Byron

Browne, a union that was delayed due to the ineligibility of married couples to both be employed on the WPA.

Byron Browne's *Variations on a Still Life* is his major painting of the period. As with many 1930s AAA members' paintings, Cubism lay well below this work's interlocking color-block compositions. The forms of Miró and the control of Mondrian preside as its key stylistic elements. Moving beyond the cubistic still-life motif, its crusty surface is animated with asymmetrical balance and sly figurative connotations. The work has a special affinity with contemporaneous paintings by Arshile Gorky. Gorky was a decisive influence upon Alice Trumbull Mason, who studied with him in the 1920s. Mason's teacher was yet to embrace abstraction, but opened her eyes to its possibilities. In *Free White Spacing* Mason explored her own version of Arp's and Miró's liberated transit of organic forms across the picture plane.

Like the Brownes and Mason, the aristocratic artist-collectors A. E. Gallatin and George L. K. Morris were early AAA members. They were the two American members of the editorial board of *Plastique*, the important international journal of abstraction. Gallatin's career as an artist began in his forties after he was established as an astute contemporary collector and sensitive art writer. Keeping abreast of the latest developments, he maintained a studio in Paris and was in contact with Braque, Léger, and Picasso. As Morris wrote of his art: "The influence that was strongest on Gallatin was the Cubist still-life painting of the Nineteen Twenties, after the colors had become sharp and vibrant. Gallatin added the next step and withdrew the representation values while he retained the balancing scheme."¹⁶

In writing of his own *Nautical Composition*, Morris explained that "the painting was conceived as an abstraction; technically, the



Willem de Kooning
Untitled, c. 1937
Gouache and pencil on paper,
6¼ × 13¾ inches
Gift of Frances and Sydney Lewis 77.34



Byron Browne
Variations on a Still Life, 1935-36
Oil on canvas, 60 × 48 inches
Gift of anonymous donors 75.19



Alice Trumbull Mason
Free White Spacing, 1939
 Oil on linen, 22 × 27¼ inches
 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wolf Kahn 75.49



George L. K. Morris
Nautical Composition, 1937 and 1942
 Oil on canvas, 51 × 35 inches
 Purchase 43.11

long divided brush-strokes seemed to suggest the rushing of water. Gradually a line turned into an anchor at the end, and other shapes suggestive of ship-construction began to appear, which gave the painting its character."¹⁷ Art editor of the influential *Partisan Review* from 1937 to 1943, Morris was the period's most articulate and evenhanded advocate for abstraction.

Yet Charles Biederman also combined a talent for writing with artistic accomplishment. In fact until relatively recently Biederman has been better known as a writer than as an artist. In two important shows of the mid-1930s, Biederman's work was presented along with that of Gallatin and Morris. In March 1936 Gallatin's Gallery of Living Art sponsored an exhibition of "Five Contemporary American Concretionists"—Biederman, Calder, John Ferren, Morris, and Charles Shaw. Gallatin was added to this group and Calder was dropped in their joint gallery exhibitions that summer in Paris and London, the European introduction to American geometric painting. Like Morris, Biederman was profoundly influenced by Léger. Biederman made a final series of paintings on canvas in 1936 and 1937, which was begun in Paris and finished in New York. In such works as *Painting, New York, January 1936*, by shading and spatially overlapping his forms, he made paintings about sculpture. Summing up his previous investigations, such works anticipated his mature achievement in painted reliefs.

Though John Ferren lived mostly abroad from 1931 to 1938, he too was included in the first AAA show. In Paris he was one of numerous Americans associated with the Abstraction-Création group, and was in close touch with Mondrian and Miró. But Jean Hélion was his closest associate and Hélion's art was the source of his own. Like Biederman, Ferren shaped his non-objective vol-

umes against single-color background, which reinforced their dimensionality on the flat picture plane.

An even more complicated and scientific spatiality is achieved in László Moholy-Nagy's painting *Space Modulator*. Beginning in Germany in 1935, the *Space Modulator* series explored means to convey complex three-dimensionality in paintings and multimedia assemblages. Fascinated by new materials and technology, and restlessly innovative, Moholy-Nagy exemplifies the formal Bauhaus empiricism he brought with him to America. In 1937 in Chicago he founded the New Bauhaus School, and, the following year, the School of Design. Moholy-Nagy represents the vitality of a new generation of American artists, exiles of politics and conscience.

The acceptance of the arriving European artists and intellectuals signaled a new American openness and internationalism. Moving from effective, but provincial and simplistic, homilies of the American Scene and Regionalism, Americans were learning to accept and understand other forms of art. In an atmosphere of growing social and political—and global—unrest, many American artists painted images specific to their nation while others created native versions of an international language of abstraction.

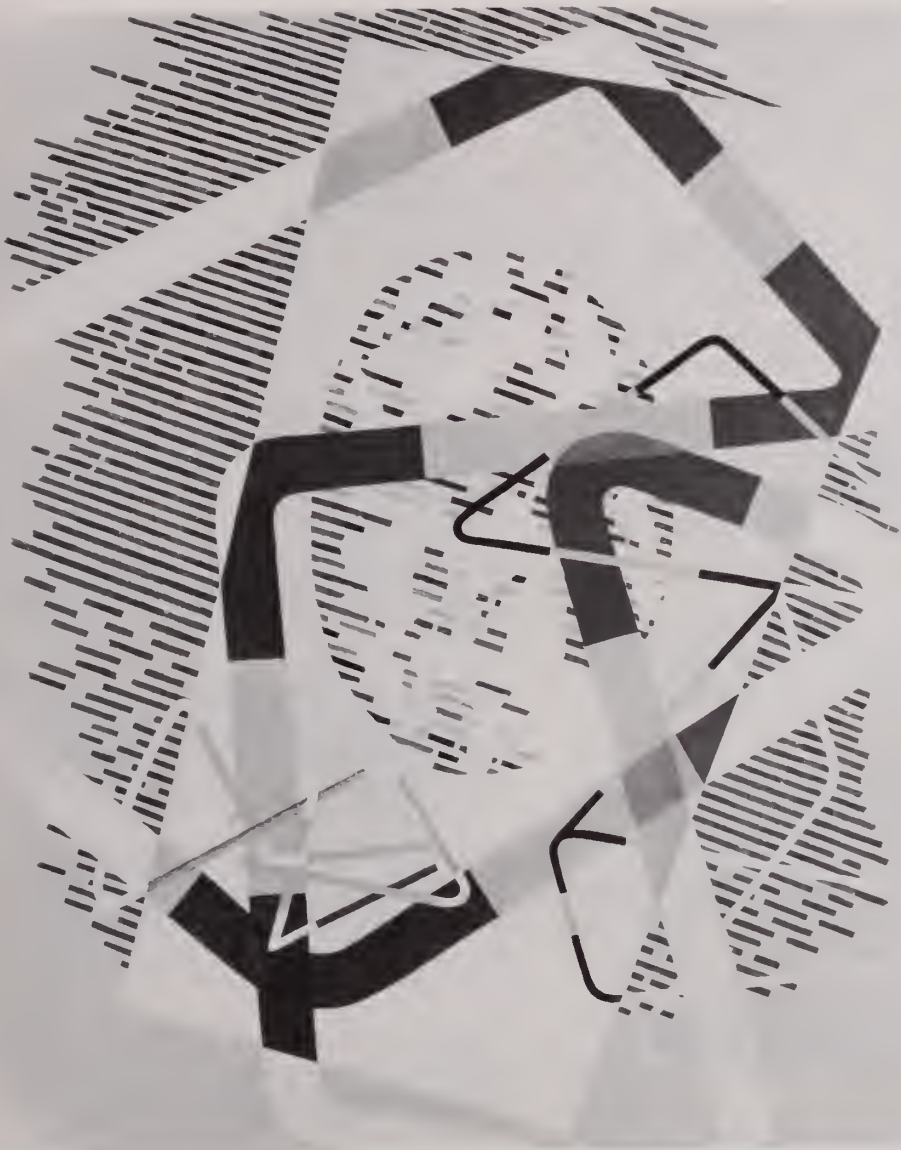
Patterson Sims
Associate Curator, Permanent Collection
Whitney Museum of American Art



Charles Biederman
Painting, New York, January 1936, 1936
Oil on canvas, 51¼ × 38¾ inches
50th Anniversary Gift of the John I. H. Baur
Purchase Fund and the Wilfred P. and Rose
Cohen Purchase Fund 80.17



John Ferren
Composition on Green, 1936
Oil on canvas, 29 × 39½ inches
Gift of the Friends of the Whitney Museum
of American Art 78.54



László Moholy-Nagy
Space Modulator, 1938–40
Oil on canvas, 47 × 47 inches
Gift of Mrs. Sybil Moholy-Nagy 55.31

1. Thomas B. Hess, *Barnett Newman* (New York: Walker and Company, 1969), p. 23.
2. Joshua C. Taylor, *The Fine Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 203.
3. Thomas Craven, *Men of Art* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1931), p. 508.
4. Robert M. Coates, "The Art Galleries: Kenneth Hayes Miller," *The New Yorker*, October 3, 1953, p. 104.
5. Milton W. Brown, *American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 182–86.
6. C. J. Bulliet, *Apples and Madonnas: Emotion and Expression in Modern Art* (New York: Covici, Friede, Inc., 1930), p. 231.
7. John Sloan, *Gist of Art* (New York: American Artists Group, Inc., 1939), p. 109.
8. Barbara Rose, *American Art Since 1900: A Critical History* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967), p. 128.
9. Charles Burchfield, "On the Middle Border," *Creative Art*, 3 (September 1928), p. xxx.
10. Edward Hopper, "Charles Burchfield, American," *The Arts*, 14 (July 1928), pp. 6–7.
11. Thomas Hart Benton, *An Artist in America*, revised edition (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1968), p. 315.
12. Grant Wood, quoted in Darrell Garwood, *Artist in Iowa: A Life of Grant Wood* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1944), p. 192.
13. Stuart Davis, "Why an Artists' Congress?" (lecture delivered at the First American Artists' Congress, New York, 1936), printed in *Stuart Davis: A Documentary Monograph*, ed. Diane Kelder (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), p. 19.
14. William C. Agee, *The 1930's: Painting & Sculpture in America*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1968), p. 7.
15. Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 230.
16. Critical note by George L. K. Morris, *A. E. Gallatin Collection: "Museum of Living Art"* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1954), p. 34.
17. George L. K. Morris, response to questionnaire on *Nautical Composition*, April 10, 1951, Registrar's Files, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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Works in the Exhibition

Dimensions are in inches, height preceding width. Unless otherwise noted, dimensions of works on paper are overall. The accession number of a work refers to the year of acquisition and, after a decimal point, to the sequence of its addition to the Permanent Collection during that year. For example, 58.9 means the work was the ninth work acquired in 1958. Promised gifts are noted with the letter P and the order of the two figures is reversed.

George Ault (1891–1948)

- * *Hudson Street*, 1932
Oil on canvas, 24 × 20
Purchase 33.40

Peggy Bacon (b. 1895)

- * *The Ardent Bowlers*, 1932
Drypoint, 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 21
Purchase 32.85

Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975)

- * *I Got a Gal on Sourwood Mountain*, 1938
Lithograph, 16 × 12
Gift of Arthur G. Altschul 72.69

Charles Biederman (b. 1906)

- * *Painting, New York, January 1936*, 1936
Oil on canvas, 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 38 $\frac{1}{4}$
50th Anniversary Gift of the John I. H. Baur
Purchase Fund and the Wilfred P. and Rose
Cohen Purchase Fund 80.17

Henry Billings (b. 1901)

- * *Lehigh Valley*, c. 1930
Tempera on composition board, 20 × 25
Purchase 35.1

Machines and Men, c. 1931
Lithograph, 14 × 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ (sight)
Print Purchase Fund 79.62

Isabel Bishop (b. 1902)

Nude, 1934
Oil on composition board, 33 × 40
Purchase 34.11

- * *On the Street*, 1934
Etching, 7 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 14 $\frac{7}{8}$
Purchase 34.34

Oscar Bluemner (1867–1938)

- * *Composition*, 1931
Oil on wood, 23 × 30
Purchase 33.4

Peter Blume (b. 1906)

- * *Light of the World*, 1932
Oil on composition board, 18 × 20 $\frac{1}{4}$
Purchase 33.5

Ilya Bolotowsky (b. 1907)

- * *Study for Mural for Williamsburg Housing Project, New York*, c. 1936
Gouache and ink on board, 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$
50th Anniversary Gift of the Edward R.
Downe, Jr., Purchase Fund, Mr. and Mrs.
William A. Marsteller, and the National
Endowment for the Arts 80.4

Untitled (Number 3 of Portfolio *American Abstract Artists Exhibition, April 3–17, 1937*), 1937
Lithograph, 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 12
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wolf Kahn in honor of
Alice Trumbull Mason 77.121b

Alexander Brook (1898–1980)

The Sentinels, 1934
Oil on canvas, 32 × 48 $\frac{1}{4}$
Purchase 34.15

Byron Browne (1907–1961)

- * *Variations on a Still Life*, 1935–36
Oil on canvas, 60 × 48
Gift of anonymous donors 75.19

Untitled (Number 5 of Portfolio *American Abstract Artists Exhibition, April 3–17, 1937*), 1937

Lithograph, 12 × 9¼

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wolf Kahn in honor of Alice Trumbull Mason 77.121d

Rosalind Bengelsdorf Browne (1916–1979)

* *Mural Sketch for Central Nurses Home, Welfare Island*, 1938

Casein and tempera on board, 5½ × 16½

Gift of the artist 77.114

Edward Bruce (1879–1943)

Industry, 1932

Oil on canvas, 28 × 36

Purchase (and exchange) 34.4

Charles Burchfield (1893–1967)

* *Winter Twilight*, 1930

Oil on composition board, 27¾ × 30½

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.128

Ice Glare, 1933

Watercolor on paper, 30¾ × 24¾

Purchase 33.64

Paul Cadmus (b. 1904)

Stewart's, 1934

Etching, 11³/₁₆ × 15¾

Purchase 34.39

Federico Castellón (1914–1971)

The Dark Figure, 1938

Oil on canvas, 17 × 26

Purchase 42.3

Howard Cook (1901–1980)

Times Square Sector, 1930

Etching, 13⁷/₈ × 11¾

Gift of Associated American Artists, Inc. 77.17

Ralston Crawford (1906–1978)

Steel Foundry, Coatesville, Pa., 1936–37

Oil on canvas, 32 × 40

Purchase 37.10

John Steuart Curry (1897–1946)

* *The Tornado*, 1932

Lithograph, 11¼ × 15¾

Purchase 32.97

Stuart Davis (1894–1964)

* *Sixth Avenue El*, 1931

Lithograph, 16 × 21

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel M. Kootz 77.74

Theater on the Beach, 1931

Lithograph, 16 × 22¾

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel M. Kootz 77.75

Willem de Kooning (b. 1904)

* *Untitled*, c. 1937

Gouache and pencil on paper, 6¾ × 13¾

Gift of Frances and Sydney Lewis 77.34

Charles Demuth (1883–1935)

Buildings, Lancaster, 1930

Oil on composition board, 24 × 20

Anonymous gift 58.63

Burgoyne Diller (1906–1965)

Second Theme, 1938

Pencil and crayon on paper, 12½ × 12¾

The List Purchase Fund 79.5

Philip Evergood (1901–1973)

* *Lily and the Sparrows*, 1939

Oil on composition board, 30 × 24

Purchase 41.42

John Ferren (1905–1970)

* *Composition on Green*, 1936

Oil on canvas, 29 × 39½

Gift of the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art 78.54

A. E. Gallatin (1881–1952)

- * *Untitled*, 1938
Oil on canvas, 20¼ × 24½
Gift of Philip Morris Incorporated 76.32

Arshile Gorky (1904–1948)

Mannikin, 1931
Lithograph, 15 × 11½
Purchase 74.36

Gertrude Greene (1904–1956)

Untitled (Number 15 of Portfolio *American Abstract Artists Exhibition, April 3–17, 1937*), 1937
Lithograph, 9¼ × 12
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wolf Kahn in honor of Alice Trumbull Mason 77.121j

O. Louis Guglielmi (1906–1956)

- * *The Various Spring*, 1937
Oil on canvas, 15¼ × 19½
Promised gift of Flora Whitney Miller
P.69.78

Marsden Hartley (1877–1943)

- * *The Old Bars, Dogtown*, 1936
Oil on composition board, 18 × 24
Purchase 37.26

Earl Horter (1881–1940)

- * *The Chrysler Building Under Construction*, c. 1931
Ink and watercolor on paper, 20¼ × 14¾
Gift of Mrs. William A. Marsteller 78.17

Joe Jones (1909–1963)

- * *American Farm*, 1936
Oil and tempera on canvas, 30 × 40
Purchase 36.144

Leon Kroll (1884–1974)

- * *Nude in a Blue Chair*, 1930
Oil on canvas, 48¼ × 36¼
Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.264

Walt Kuhn (1877–1949)

- * *The Blue Clown*, 1931
Oil on canvas, 30 × 25
Purchase 32.25

Yasuo Kuniyoshi (1889–1953)

I'm Tired, 1938
Oil on canvas, 40¼ × 31
Purchase 39.12

Armin Landeck (b. 1905)

Housetops, 14th Street, 1937
Etching, 17¼ × 10½
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Marsteller in memory of Erni Meyer 77.11

Edward Laning (1906–1981)

- * *Fourteenth Street*, 1931
Tempera on canvas, 30 × 40
Purchase 33.17

Louis Lozowick (1892–1972)

- * *Subway Construction*, 1931
Lithograph, 11⁷/₁₆ × 15¹⁵/₁₆
Gift of Philip Morris Incorporated 77.8

George Luks (1867–1933)

Mrs. Gamley, 1930
Oil on canvas, 66 × 48
Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.289

Helen Lundeberg (b. 1908)

Planets, 1937
Lithograph, 16 × 12½
M. Anthony Fisher Purchase Fund 81.17

John Marin (1870–1953)

* *Region of Brooklyn Bridge Fantasy*, 1932

Watercolor on paper, 18¾ × 22¼

Purchase 49.8

Reginald Marsh (1898–1954)

2nd Avenue El, 1930 (restruck 1969)

Etching, 13 × 15½

Original plate donated by William Benton
69.97b.

* *Bread Line—No One Has Starved*, 1932
(restruck 1969)

Etching, 13 × 15½

Original plate donated by William Benton
69.97j

* *Tattoo—Shave—Haircut*, 1932
(restruck 1969)

Etching, 13 × 15½

Original plate donated by William Benton
69.97k

Ten Cents a Dance, 1933

Tempera on panel, 36 × 48

Bequest of Felicia Meyer Marsh 80.31.10

Alice Trumbull Mason (1904–1971)

* *Free White Spacing*, 1939

Oil on linen, 22 × 27¼

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wolf Kahn 75.49

Alfred H. Maurer (1868–1932)

Still Life, c. 1930

Oil on composition board, 18 × 21½

Gift of Charles Simon 61.17

Kenneth Hayes Miller (1876–1952)

* *Box Party*, 1936

Oil and tempera on canvas, 60 × 46

Purchase 36.147

László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946)

* *Space Modulator*, 1938–40

Oil on canvas, 47 × 47

Gift of Mrs. Sybil Moholy-Nagy 55.31

George L. K. Morris (1905–1975)

Untitled (Number 8 of Portfolio *American Abstract Artists Exhibition*, April 3–17, 1937), 1937

Lithograph, 12 × 9¼

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wolf Kahn in honor of
Alice Trumbull Mason 77.121t

* *Nautical Composition*, 1937 and 1942

Oil on canvas, 51 × 35

Purchase 43.11

Georgia O'Keeffe (b. 1887)

* *The Mountain, New Mexico*, 1931

Oil on canvas, 30 × 36

Purchase 32.14

Man Ray (1890–1976)

* *La Fortune*, 1938

Oil on canvas, 24 × 29

Gift of the Simon Foundation 72.129

Ad Reinhardt (1913–1967)

Collage, 1938

Collage on paper, 15 × 11

Gift of Rita Reinhardt 76.51

Louis Ribak (1903–1979)

Home Relief Station, 1935–36

Oil on canvas, 28 × 36

Purchase 36.148

Theodore Roszak (1907–1981)

Fisherman's Bride, 1934

Oil on canvas, 29 × 27

Purchase 34.24

Ben Shahn (1898–1969)

- * *Scott's Run, West Virginia*, 1937
Tempera on cardboard, $22\frac{1}{4} \times 27\frac{7}{8}$
Purchase 38.11

Charles Sheeler (1883–1965)

- * *Interior, Bucks County Barn*, 1932
Conté on paper, $15 \times 18\frac{3}{4}$
Purchase 33.78

John Sloan (1871–1951)

Salesmanship, 1930
Etching, $9\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{9}{16}$
Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney
31.906

- * *A Thirst for Art*, 1939
Etching, $8 \times 10\frac{1}{8}$
Purchase 52.35

Isaac Soyer (1907–1981)

- * *Employment Agency*, 1937
Oil on canvas, $34\frac{1}{4} \times 45$
Purchase 37.44

Raphael Soyer (b. 1899)

- * *Office Girls*, 1936
Oil on canvas, 26×24
Purchase 36.149

Reading from Left to Right, 1938

Oil on canvas, $26\frac{1}{4} \times 20\frac{1}{4}$
Gift of Mrs. Emil Arnold in memory of Emil
Arnold and in honor of Lloyd Goodrich 74.3

Niles Spencer (1893–1952)

The Green Table, 1930
Oil on canvas, 50×40
Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.361

Joseph Stella (1877–1946)

- * *Collage, Number 11*, c. 1933
Collage of leaves, sand, paper and wood,
 $11\frac{1}{2} \times 17$
Gift of Mrs. Morton Baum 68.23

Albert Swinden (1901–1961)

- * *Sketch for Mural, Williamsburg Housing Project*, c. 1936
Gouache on board, $18 \times 21\frac{3}{4}$
John I. H. Baur Purchase Fund and the
M. Anthony Fisher Purchase Fund 81.1

Augustus Vincent Tack (1870–1949)

- * *Before Egypt*, 1930–35
Oil on canvas mounted on composition board,
 26×45
Gift of Duncan Phillips 60.13

Grant Wood (1892–1942)

- * *Dinner for Threshers* (left section), 1933
Pencil and gouache on brown paper,
 $17\frac{3}{4} \times 26\frac{3}{4}$
Purchase 33.79
- * *Dinner for Threshers* (right section), 1933
Pencil and gouache on brown paper,
 $17\frac{3}{4} \times 26\frac{3}{4}$
Purchase 33.80

- * *Tree Planting Group*, 1937

Lithograph, $11\frac{3}{4} \times 16$
Gift of Arthur G. Altschul 72.78

- * *Shrine Quartet*, 1939

Lithograph, 12×16
Gift of Arthur G. Altschul 78.28

Works marked with an asterisk in the preceding checklist, as well as the following additional works, are being shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Fairfield County, in the final presentation of the exhibition.

Additions:

Paul Cadmus (b. 1904)

Sailors and Floosies, 1938

Oil and tempera on panel, 25 × 39½

Anonymous gift (subject to life interest) 64.42

Francis Criss (1901–1973)

Third Avenue El, c. 1937

Oil on canvas, 36 × 41½

Purchase, with funds from the Felicia Meyer Marsh Purchase Fund 82.1

Arshile Gorky (1904–1948)

Painting, 1936–37

Oil on canvas, 38 × 48

Purchase 37.39

John Marin (1870–1953)

Wave on Rock, 1937

Oil on canvas, 22¾ × 30

Purchase, with funds from Charles Simon and the Painting and Sculpture Committee 81.18

Charles Shaw (1892–1974)

Plastic Polygon, 1938

Oil on wood, 38½ × 23½

Purchase, with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee 82.5

American Art of the 1930s

A Traveling Exhibition Made Possible
Through the Support of the National Committee
of the Whitney Museum of American Art

Cedar Rapids Art Center
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
October 4–November 29, 1981

Ackland Art Museum
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
December 16, 1981–February 7, 1982

The Art Gallery, University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland
February 24–April 18, 1982

San Antonio Museum of Art
San Antonio, Texas
May 5–June 27, 1982

Phoenix Art Museum
Phoenix, Arizona
July 14–September 5, 1982

Minnesota Museum of Art
St. Paul, Minnesota
September 22–November 14, 1982

Columbus Museum of Art
Columbus, Ohio
December 4, 1982–January 16, 1983

The Boise Gallery of Art
Boise, Idaho
February 17–April 3, 1983

Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art
Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas
April 20–June 12, 1983

Whitney Museum of American Art, Fairfield County
Stamford, Connecticut
July 8–August 31, 1983